

Stocked Trout Program Evaluation – Year 1

2013-2014 Overview

Year 1 Overview

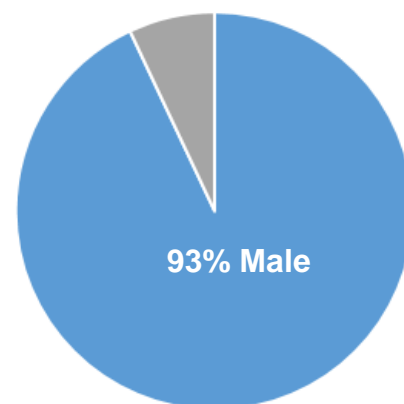
In 2013, the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF) and Virginia Tech began evaluating the agency's stocked trout program. Within the past year Virginia Tech researchers conducted public meetings, requested public input online, mailed a survey to over 5,000 trout license holders, and conducted in-person surveys on selected stocked trout waters. The primary focus of this update is on the first year of in-person surveys. The in-person surveys will help VDGIF and Virginia Tech understand 1) who actively fishes for stocked trout 2) how many trout anglers catch and at what rate and 3) response differences between in-person and mail surveys.

During the first year of in-person surveys, we interviewed anglers on six waters: Big Stoney Creek (Giles County), Pandapas Pond (Montgomery County), Roanoke River (City of Salem), Whitetop Laurel Creek (Washington County), Lincolnshire Lake (Tazewell County), and Frying Pan Creek (Dickenson County). The first year of surveys focused on waters in the southwest. VDGIF and Virginia Tech will conduct another year of in-person interviews on approximately 10 more waters in the Shenandoah Valley and east of the Blue Ridge.



Summary Statistics of Year 1

- 2435 surveys administered
 - 1770 anglers contacted
 - 52% of anglers caught trout
 - Average age: 55



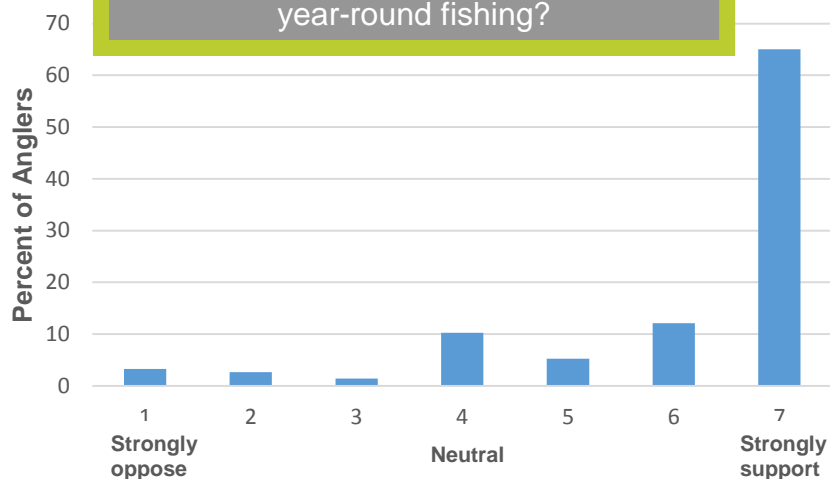
Questions or comments can be directed to Amanda Hyman:
ahyman@vt.edu

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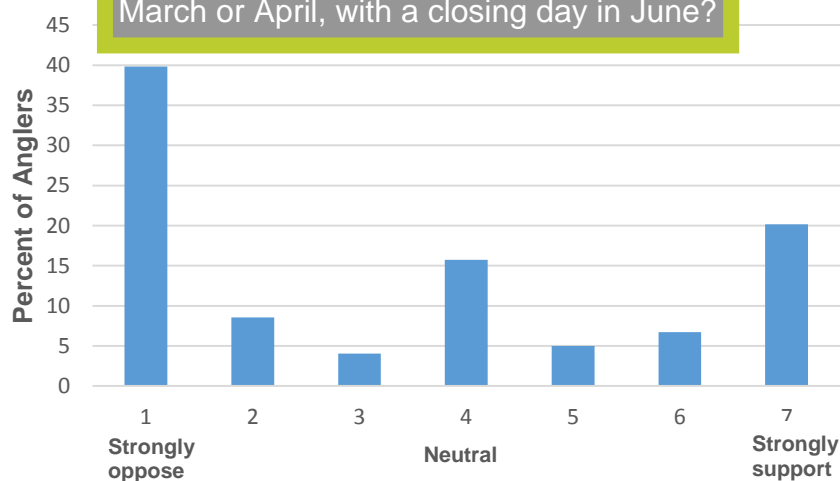
Opening Day vs. Year-Round Season

Question: To what level do you support or oppose the current regulations that allow year-round fishing?



Over 60% of anglers interviewed strongly supported the current regulations that allow year-round trout fishing.

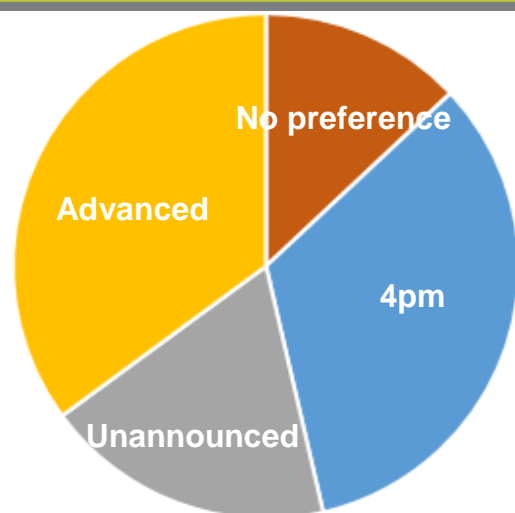
Question: To what level do you support or oppose having a defined opening day in March or April, with a closing day in June?



Approximately 40% of anglers interviewed strongly opposed having an opening-day season. It is noteworthy however, that roughly 20% of the anglers interviewed strongly supported having a defined opening-day.

Announcement Preferences

Question: Currently stocking date and location are announced at 4pm the day of stocking. Do you prefer the stocking date and location to be unannounced, announced in advance, or announced at 4pm?

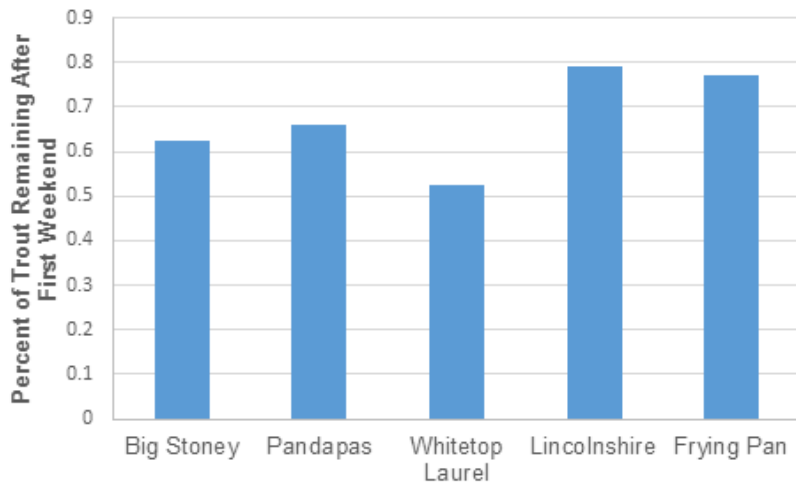


Anglers were split in their preference for announcement of stocking date and location. Of anglers interviewed, 35% wanted stocking date and location to be announced in advance, 33% of anglers preferred the current practice of announcing stockings at 4pm on the day of stocking, and 18% of anglers interviewed wanted the stockings to be completely unannounced.



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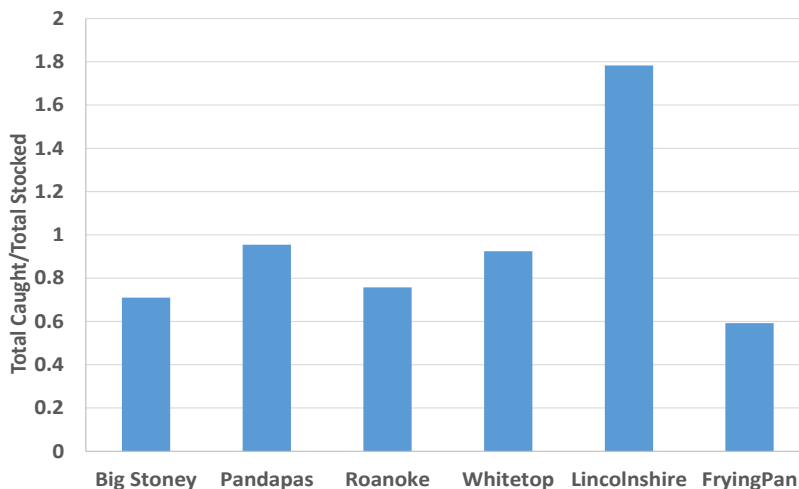
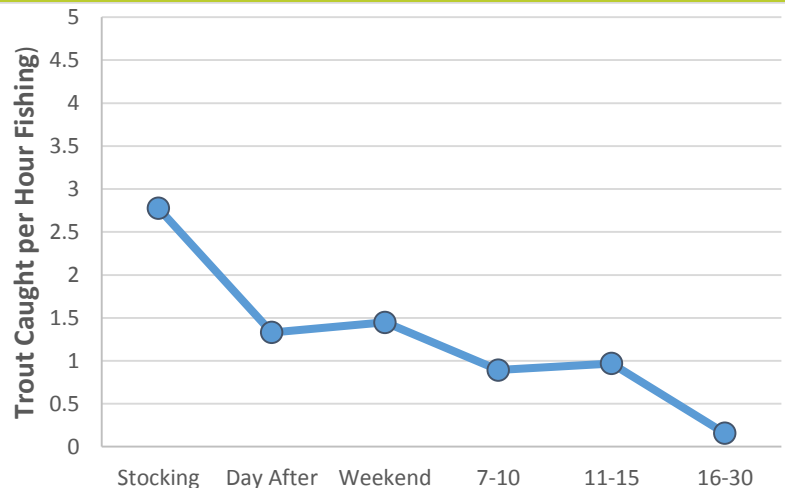


Are most trout caught within a few days of stocking?

Many trout anglers believe that all of the fish are caught out within a few days of stocking the water. Of the fish stocked 50-80% still remain after the first weekend following stocking.

How fast are people catching trout?

Although the majority of the stocked fish remain well after the day of stocking, the rate at which anglers catch fish does vary. Anglers catch fish fastest on stocking day. On the day after stocking up to 15 days after however, anglers still catch trout at a rate usually considered acceptable by fisheries managers: 1 trout per hour of fishing.



How many stocked trout are being caught?

The majority of trout stocked in Virginia are caught, but many anglers throw their fish back, allowing fish to be caught more than once. On Lincolnshire Lake, an average fish is caught nearly 2 times. The total number of trout caught ranged from 60-178% of the total number stocked in a season.